

Degradation

by Princessive

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Summary: It's a bit laughable seeing the king fall to a simple commoner. Kagehina

Degradation

It's always been what he wants.

Spoiled from a young age, Tobio Kageyama never had to resort to childish crying and begging, simply because there was never a need to degrade himself. A simple demand from the mouth of his royal highness himself is enough to provoke his parents to get him exactly what he wants. There were never any questions asked or requests denied. What the young child asked for was what he got.

Throughout his school years, he had become known to be the "king of the hill" and the "king of the playground," dominating the school faction with ease. His personal lackeys would do his bidding regardless of how ridiculous his demand was, even when his royal highness asked them to become his throne and they begrudgingly shaped themselves into a chair just so he wouldn't have to sit on the much too hot metal park benches. Children older than him oftentimes scoffed at him, until they were met with chilling dark blue glares, immediately instilling a permanent scar of fear into their minds.

Nobody could stop the little tyrant.

During his junior high years, he participated in the volleyball club, and though he found a place he could shine brilliantly on his own merit and skill, his joining of this one club would be the beginning of the cause of his slow descent from high status. Eventually, his teammates began to refer to him as the "king of the court," not referring to his fear-striking ability as a setter but for his overbearing, dictatorial demands that couldn't possibly be achieved by his peers.

And for once in Kageyama's life, when he asked for somethingâ€”when he demanded that his teammates move faster and jump higherâ€”his wishes were denied, and he was shunned to his own pitiful solitude.

Since then, he had mellowed out slightly coming into high school. He is scared of experiencing the feelings of rejection again, and due to this apprehension of being renounced once again, he tries his best not to get close to anyone. Being friends with anyone only serves to limit his abilities to rule. As a king, he must be able to look past anything and rule with an iron fist alone, after all.

At Karasuno High School, the first person he met was someone he didn't expect to see again, or at least not wearing the same uniform as he was: the swift orange-haired boy his junior high school team crushed just last year. Remembering the energetic boy's name was a tad bit difficult for him. In fact, he doesn't even remember ever hearing of it being mentioned in his vicinity. Yet, he distinctly remembers the unrelenting passion in those honey amber eyes, the way they shone with jubilee and want for victory. He remembers how the short boy's lithe body moves around the other side of the court with ease, his expeditious movements hard to predict. Unfortunately, Kageyama feels much potential wasted on an overall lousy player, and seeing the orange-haired boy again makes him a little bit angry, his cheeks warming with indignation.

Yet, even despite having initially despised him, Kageyama finds himself eventually respecting Shouyou Hinata. It's an obligatory feeling, after all, as they are considered partners nowâ€”the only two people in the world capable of surprising opponents with their strange oddball quick. Admittedly, their special quick makes his body surge with adrenaline, and the happy-good feelings swirling in his stomach makes him want to smile, because it's actually fun being a part of the team and being able to see one of his fastest tosses being hit.

He doesn't remember when it started, but sooner or later, Kageyama starts softening up a bit towards the orange-haired ball of sunshine and actually begins to enjoy his energetic presence. Not a second is quiet when he's around Hinata, and though he usually does prefer silent solitude, the occasional moments of rapid blabber and excited movements is something he looks forward to every single day.

Lately, he finds his mind lingering on thoughts of Hinata a bit longer than what would be considered normal for friends (at least, Kageyama would to think they are friends; they have never verbally established it, and Kageyama isn't experienced enough to distinguish partnership from friendship, but he would like to think they are). His eyes begin to subconsciously lock on Hinata's figure in the immediate of his entrance. Carefully, he studies ever detail that his energetic friend has to offer: his soft, silky orange locks and the way they fly in every single direction; his bright brown eyes that sparkle much too easily and gets excited much too quickly; and, Kageyama's personal favorite, his toothy smile which he seems to give everyone. But Kageyama notices a slight difference in the toothy grin when it is directed at him, and that is how Hinata's eyes are open and looks directly at him.

At the end of their first year of high school, Kageyama makes sure

that Hinata knows exactly what Kageyama wants: a short hug to commemorate all the times they have helped each other shine on the volleyball court, and for all other times they have been successful because of each other outside of the court. But Hinata is never really one to listen to Kageyama's wishes, so instead of a short hug, Kageyama feels Hinata wrap his lanky arms around his waist and nuzzle his face into Kageyama's chest, Hinata's steady breathing causing Kageyama's heartbeat to become a bit erratic. They stay in the embrace for a couple minutes, relishing in the memories created between each other, the past year having been a lot more fun than either would have anticipated, and then slowly Hinata's hold on Kageyama loosens and the hug ends. Though, Kageyama isn't thinking at the moment and misses the warmth he felt around him, so he feels it's his turn to wrap his own arms around his orange-haired friend's smallish shoulders, pulling him into his chest much like a treasured object. He buries his face into the crook of Hinata's shoulders and takes a whiff of the faint scent of strawberry shampoo around him (he remembers Hinata complaining earlier that day that he accidentally used his little sister's shampoo). He feels Hinata gasp against his body, his body wavering and unsure, but Kageyama doesn't let go. He doesn't want to go, and he doesn't have to let go. But eventually, he releases his hold on the short boy and gruffly tells him to text him or call him or anything because they are "definitely hanging out over the summer, okay?" And then he darts off, embarrassed by his actions.

Summer brings a new layer to their friendship. They meet with each other almost every day, even if for only a few minutes, to discuss about anything really, and sometimes they go out and eat together or occasionally just walk around in silence, happy enough that they are able to spend time together. Their usual arguments from the past year have now become uncommon and less trivial, though Kageyama purposely provokes Hinata since he sometimes just misses seeing the orange-haired boy's burning red cheeks puff up in anger as his lips waver in anger. It amuses him too much.

Starting their second year of high school, Kageyama starts feeling like he physically stops being able to breathe when he sees this girl clinging onto Hinata a bit too closely for his tastes. The girl is pretty, and that's what makes him the angriest, because she's pretty and Hinata likes pretty girls, so of course it's only natural that Hinata likes this pretty girl wrapping herself around his finger. Kageyama isn't actually really sure why he feels like he has the sudden desire to beat Hinata up into a pulp now. Maybe he's jealous that Hinata, of all people, is probably going to get a girlfriend before he does. Or maybe it's the fact that because Hinata is somehow suddenly getting more popular around campus due to his amazing performances in the volleyball tournaments last year, he feels that their time together will start to disintegrate into nothing.

So, for some reason, even though Kageyama wants to hold on to the precious moments they have once shared together alone, he begins to avoid Hinata like the plague, only really looking at him on the volleyball court. His ex-friend (just saying that word makes Kageyama sick to his stomach) never confronts him about the sudden distance between them, making said distance continue to grow until eventually, Kageyama sees Hinata as only a distant memory of what had once been his sole source of happiness.

He wants Hinata to come back to him and for him to forget about what

happened between them and to just be able to see Hinata give him one of his open-eyed, toothy grins reserved for Kageyama and Kageyama only. Hinata had never once treated Kageyama like a king, though, unlike how everyone else treats him; and maybe, in some sort of sick ironic fatalism, that's why he likes Hinata so much. But right now, as he lays down on his bed and stares at his ceiling, dimly lit from the moonlight seeping through his window, he feels like he'll never feel happiness again.

Since meeting Hinata, he feels like he never gets what he wants anymore.

On one cold winter's day, Kageyama is sitting on a park bench all alone, wrapped in warm clothing, sipping on some hot chocolate. He watches the gentle flurry of snow around him and feels, for once in his life, a calming sensation inside him. The only sounds he hears are the rolling laughter of children behind him and of their parents chattering quietly among themselves. It's nice, he thinks, just staying like this. But his serene thoughts are broken by gentle sobbing around him, and his ears perk up because even though he hasn't heard that voice in forever, the pitch and rhythm is all too familiar for him not to recognize it.

He looks around the park and sees a small figure huddled under a tree, orange tufts sticking precariously out of his woven winter cap. Kageyama feels his mind going numb when he sees the boy he had once shared so many laughs and arguments with looking so weak and helpless. He wants to go up and say that it'll be okay, but Kageyama isn't a part of Hinata's world anymore, he knows, and he feels as if he physically can't, his body frozen in place. So he just ignores the crying boy, and he just ignores the aching he feels in his chest and continues to sip his empty cup of hot chocolate.

Since seeing Hinata again, Kageyama's thoughts return to the pain and torture of thinking about the energetic boy. He really misses him, but he hates the feeling of heartbreak he feels whenever the image of Hinata appears in his mind. It reminds him of the feeling of rejection he once felt in junior high—a feeling he thought he would never feel again, but he was stupid for letting someone get close to him. He's only paying the price now. He doesn't even understand how it came to this. He feels like he wasn't the same tyrannical king people once thought of him as when he was younger. In fact, if anything, it's Hinata who is treated like royalty. It's as if Kageyama dethroned himself to give Hinata the crown, because even though he doesn't like to admit it, he would do absolutely anything for Hinata. He wants to fulfill every single one of his childish demands, and whenever he heard him say "one more time, Kageyama," he would feel a kind of happiness bubbling inside of him that just felt too good to be true. To him, Hinata is his king, and Kageyama was demoted to a lowly peasant. But really, he doesn't mind, as long as he can see Hinata smile at him. If anything, as king, that's all he could ask for.

In a hasty decision made one night, when the moon is full outside and the stars are actually visible, Kageyama grabs his jacket and runs downstairs and out of his house, quickly darting down the sidewalk at breakneck speed. His feet automatically navigate themselves around the familiar terrain, whizzing through the neighborhood with a sort of newfound freedom. They know exactly where to take him.

And then they finally stop, and Kageyama finds himself standing in front of a small, traditional-looking household, humble and cozy, and he sees a window that's slightly open and still lit brightly. He peers inside and, of course, he sees the orange-haired boy lying down in bed with a volleyball in his hands, the faint sounds of a television cartoon playing in the background. With careful steps, Kageyama tip-toes his way towards the window and takes in a deep breath before knocking on the glass. He hears startled shuffling inside, and in once second, he is met with cautious, hard brown eyes glaring at him.

Kageyama is compelled to open his mouth to say somethingâ€"anythingâ€"but nothing comes out, and Hinata only stands there in shock, blinking in disbelief. Then, without any warning, tears begin welling up at the corners of his eyes and he sinks down into the floor, now a sobbing mess. Kageyama remembers this scene all too well, and he begins to panic, unsure of the proper reaction to this type of situation. He feels he should ignore it again, but it's different because he purposely sought out the orange-haired boy, and in some way, he feels those tears are because of him.

So he pokes his hand through the open crevice of the window and tries to unlock it, being successful after the third attempt, and climbs into Hinata's room, walking towards the crying boy. At that moment, he stops thinking altogether and just wraps the small boy in his arms, much like how he once did not too long ago. The feeling of Hinata's warmth is enough to make Kageyama want to cry himself, because he misses this feeling too much and has been waiting for the day that he could once again press his face against Hinata's small shoulders. He holds back the feeling though, because crying in front of Hinata is something the orange-haired boy would never let go of and use as blackmail for the rest of their lives. But when Hinata starts mumbling how he "misses Kageyama so much" and "feels empty without him," Kageyama feels a foreign liquid dribbling down his cheeks, and he realizes that he's, for once in his life, crying. The sensation is weird, as it's both sad and uplifting. He sniffles and holds Hinata tighter, calling him an idiot then calling himself an idiot; and the world feels like it stops moving just for them at that instance, but he doesn't mind because he wants to be like this forever.

Of course, nothing good lasts forever, and their touching moment gets interrupted by Hinata's younger sister, who opens the door and just looks at them and, without questions, says that it's time for Hinata to turn off the lights and go to sleep. Kageyama lets go of Hinata, his cheeks growing pink from embarrassment, and makes a hasty retreat back out through the open window, but he feels a soft tug on his jacket, making him stop in his step. He looks at Hinata, his usually vibrant eyes lidded and tired from crying. The shorter boy looks at Kageyama with a needy expression, asking him if he can stay with him because Hinata's scared to let him go again. And because Kageyama doesn't want to see Hinata so hurt again, and because he has a compelling need to fulfill every single one of his wishes, Kageyama nods in agreement and slips between the covers with Hinata, who snuggles up into his chest and immediately begins to sleep.

Kageyama doesn't sleep until an hour later, and all the while before then, he smiles to himself, thinking that he actually doesn't mind this for tonight. That night, his dreams are actually sweet and happy, and he is able to rest peacefully for once, even when he is

being physically attacked by the hug monster that is Hinata.

The next day, the two begin talking at school again, not mentioning their life altering event from last night. Kageyama sees the pretty girl from the beginning of the year clinging on to Hinata again, but seeing Hinata give him a toothy, open-eyed grin puts Kageyama to rest. The grin Hinata gives has the meaning along the lines of "don't worry, I'll always be there for you," and Kageyama believes him completely.

The blooming of the cherry blossom trees signals the end of the cold and the beginning of new life. The rest of their second year of high school goes by smoothly. Kageyama feels like he's getting closer and closer to Hinata every day, and when Hinata starts having a relationship with the pretty girl, Kageyama is supportive of them both. Volleyball brings them both down, as in a couple more days they know they'll have their final farewell with their kind upperclassmen (and Hinata is sad that Nishinoya never really taught him the "Rolling Thunder"). Captain Ennoshita passes the title down to Kageyama, and he humbly accepts it, promising he'll bring Karasuno victory next year under his stead and under the stead of the newly-acclaimed ace, Hinata. (Hinata's eyes sparkle at Kageyama calling him an ace and doesn't stop complimenting him for being a good captain already the next couple of minutes thereafter.)

Over the summer, Hinata's relationship with the pretty girl ends abruptly, and it's Kageyama who buys him small tubs of ice cream and criticizes him for sulking in his bed all day for being so depressed over a girl who Hinata only dated because no one else had ever asked him before. At the Hinata household, Hinata's little sister, Natsu, always ends up in Kageyama's arms, and she keeps saying that even though she wants to marry Kageyama one day, she knows that her older brother would be "mad" at her if she does. Hinata always blushes from embarrassment after such a blunt proclamation and always shoos her away from them. Kageyama snickers softly, never really understanding what exactly Natsu meant until a couple months later.

With his brand new "number one" jersey, Kageyama starts off his third year of high school on the top of the world, ruling the volleyball club alongside the Karasuno ace, Hinata, proudly wearing his "number two" jersey (though Kageyama knows he secretly misses wearing his "number ten" jersey). The new Karasuno members are all tough and able to bring the entire team to victory in all of the tournaments they'll enter, but Kageyama continues to make everyone work as hard as he had worked in his past two years in the volleyball club.

Outside of the volleyball club, Kageyama feels as if though he only really hangs out with Hinata, but he doesn't really mind that. Eventually, the two begin talking about what they'll be doing after their final year in high school is over. Neither are exactly blessed with smarts nor do they have the motivation to excel in academics, so Kageyama feels like Hinata's "I'm going to try to see if I can continue playing volleyball in a local college" is the only natural response that he could have; and when Hinata asks him in turn, Kageyama's response is naturally similar, of course. In the end, they ultimately decide which college to go to together, and it's Hinata who asks Kageyama if he wants to be roommates, and Kageyama could only give a look that practically screamed "of course I do; are you an idiot?"

Heartfelt goodbyes at the end of their third year affect Hinata a lot to the point where he's tearing up just from seeing everyone's faces. All of their underclassmen wish both of them good luck in college and more luck on the continuation of their volleyball careers. Hinata doesn't stop crying until Kageyama drives them up to their new apartment building a couple hours away, their luggage already in the back of his car, having had planned everything for a month now. When they see their apartment, the moment feels really surreal and the past three years feel almost like a blur to them. But once Kageyama inserts their new key into the doorknob lock and twists it open, the past suddenly doesn't matter to them anymore because their life is just beginning now.

Now at the age where the responsibilities are real and he's really just figuring out himself, Kageyama realizes many different things all at once. First off, both he and Hinata give up on volleyball, but he finds a newfound passion in the environment and everything that deals with nature after visiting an arboretum in his environmental science class. He has found a new perspective on how trees work and taking care of the environment and badly wants to work hard on helping the earth, his passions bringing him into a volunteer group that cleans up the trash around the area and plants new trees and flowers in places that need it the most. Second, he begins to focus on his academics a bit more than ever, mainly because he has gained a respect for academics and the professors that passionately teach their favorite topics. And third, he realizes that living with Hinata isn't quite as bad as he thought it would end up being. Despite his hyperactive personality, Hinata is actually surprisingly clean and organized, and the best part about having Hinata as a roommate is his shocking ability to cook pretty well. Every night, when Kageyama returns to their apartment room from class, he is met with an apron-donned Hinata and a nice meal on the table. Kageyama always ends up yelling at Hinata in the end because he doesn't want to be dependent on Hinata making him dinners all the time, but behind his scowls are hidden smiles that he can't possibly show his orange-haired roommate. Hinata always says he doesn't mind making dinner just because cooking gives him the same feeling as spiking one of Kageyama's tosses, and at that moment, both begin to reminisce their years in high school fondly, but the memories make them a bit too sad so Hinata cracks a joke and just grins when Kageyama furiously rubs his orange locks in frustration.

One Friday night, while they are watching a horror movie together, Hinata suddenly lowers the volume and turns to Kageyama, a thick, serious atmosphere forming around them. He puts his hands on Kageyama's shoulders and tells him that he can't laugh at what Hinata is about to say next, and Kageyama nods in the trusting way Hinata finds comfort in. Then, after a couple moments of silence, Kageyama hears his roommate confess to him that he is, in fact, homosexual and wants Kageyama to know that he'll never do anything to him so he shouldn't worry. To be honest, Kageyama isn't really surprised about Hinata's confession. In some little part of him, he had always suspected the little orange-haired boy maybe played for the other team. Though, surprisingly, it's not Hinata's confession that he focuses his attention on but the fact that Hinata, for once in his life, had called Kageyama by his first name during his confession. Just hearing "Tobio" escape those chapped pink lips makes him blush. He wants to say Hinata's first name too, to return the favor, but he's so used to just calling him "idiot Hinata" that he really can't bring himself to saying it just yet.

After Hinata's confession, Kageyama begins to think about his own sexuality. He had always dubbed himself as being straight just because all throughout his life, he never really thought about it before. But now, when he really thinks about it, he never really remembers ever having been infatuated by a girl before. He starts to think that maybe he's gay just like Hinata, but he ponders on the thought again and realizes he has never really been attracted to a man either. Ultimately, Kageyama comes to the conclusion that he doesn't really have a sexuality and will probably end up being alone for the rest of his life, though he doesn't really mind the idea of that. Except, when he imagines his future self, coming into a dark, empty room and eating ramen for the rest of his life (because, honestly, he can't cook at all and he has no plans on learning how to any time soon) he curses at himself for being so dependent on Hinata; but really, deep inside, he thinks that maybe, just maybe, if Hinata doesn't find anyone to settle down with, he would like to continue living with him even after collegeâ€”not just as a cook (though Kageyama admits that's a huge part of it) but because life without Hinata is just something he can't fathom.

Eventually, Hinata brings home a man. Kageyama doesn't pay it any mind until he recognizes the familiar whispers and mumbles coming from the man, so he pops his head into the kitchen and is shocked to see Kenma Kozume sitting on their makeshift table. His overall appearance has changed a lot, Kageyama notices, as he has grown a lot taller since he last saw the Nekoma captain during his second year of high school, and his hair is dyed at the roots, making him completely blond. His hair, too, is a bit longer and reaches past his shoulders. Though, despite the change in appearance, Kageyama notices that his personality hasn't changed at all, and he is still the same old awkward person he had always been.

When Kenma notices Kageyama staring at him around the corner of the hallway, he quickly looks away and mumbles something to Hinata, who only laughs and calls for Kageyama over. Almost obediently, Kageyama walks over and takes a seat next to his roommate, careful not to make eye contact with Kenma. Hinata says that he found Kenma wandering around the area, looking for a friend who failed to pick him up at the train station. Apparently, Kenma had been waiting at the station for a little over two hours before setting off on finding his friend alone, but unfortunately he hasn't been successful, and his friend hasn't replied to any of his texts yet. Hinata, being the generous guy he is, decides that Kenma should stay with him and Kageyama, but Hinata is careful to say only if Kageyama is okay with it. Being put on the spot really, really sucks, Kageyama thinks, and it feels as if he can't possibly say no or he'll seem like a heartless jerkâ€”not that he would say no either way, so he agrees to let Kenma stay with them, free of charge.

Having Kenma around their room doesn't really change the dynamic between him and Hinata at all. In fact, he feels as if though Kenma being at their house ironically deepens his relationship between Hinata, because the more they hang out with Kenma, the more they realize that, comparatively, they like each other's presence much better. After a week of living together with Kenma, his friend finally texts him back and apologizes for everything that has happened, blaming everything on a weird series of unfortunate events that led to him not being able to use his phone or his car for a while. Kenma doesn't seem fazed at all. He leaves their apartment with a brisk

goodbye, but before he could leave, he gives Kageyama a knowing look that he doesn't quite understand. Kageyama wonders if it's payback for the scary looks he used to give the poor setter back in high school, but honestly, he isn't sure; though he doesn't dwell on it long and continues his life as a college student.

During winter break, their apartment room is filled with the foreign sound of a doorbell. Hinata's ears perk up as he rushes towards the door. Upon opening it, Kageyama hears a girl's voice. He's never heard that voice before, so it piques his interest, and he makes his way to the door. He sees a young girl who looks like Hinata when he was in junior high but with long hair. Natsu, seeing Kageyama looking at her behind her brother, smiles really big and jumps onto him, and Kageyama instinctively takes her into his arms. Hinata laughs wholeheartedly and hugs them both, asking Natsu what she's doing at their apartment building. She tells them that she had joined the volleyball club, and Kageyama smirks smugly when she says she loves being a setter and that it's the coolest position. A despondent Hinata glares at Kageyama, but Kageyama sees enjoyment in his bright amber eyes and happiness from seeing his younger sister, probably. Maybe he even feels a bit of sad happiness from recollecting memories of his volleyball years. Kageyama thinks that because he feels that way too, so after Natsu leaves, Kageyama goes back into his room and begins to rummage through his old belongings, finding a slightly deflated but still useable blue- and yellow-colored volleyball.

When he shows Hinata, his eyes burn up with a passion that Kageyama remembers seeing many times back in high school. They go outside into a grassy area, and for the first time in a couple months, Kageyama throws the ball towards the orange-haired boy, who receives it almost as perfectly as Nishinoya. Then, when the ball begins its curved journey back down to Kageyama, he raises his arms up, readying himself for a toss. Something must have sparked in Hinata because he suddenly looks sad and Kageyama just doesn't understand why. So, as he tosses the ball into the air, he musters up all his courage to say the one word he has been holding back on saying for a while now: Shouyou.

And Hinaâ€œno, Shouyouâ€œlooks up at Kageyama and gives him a flustered look, jumping high in the air and giving the volleyball the proper slam of an ace. Afterwards, he picks up the volleyball and hands it back to him, his head hanging low. He whispers something that Kageyama doesn't hear, so Shouyou repeats it a little louder, and even though Kageyama hears it this time, he's taken aback and isn't sure how to react.

I love you, Tobio. That's what Shouyou says, and when Kageyama doesn't say anything and doesn't even move, Shouyou continues with more unbelievable words: I've been in love with you since the time you told me I was invincible. I just never accepted it until recently.

Kageyama still doesn't answer. His lips are sealed tightly and his chest aches with pain. What's going on is beyond his comprehension. It feels like one sick dream. Shouyou just looks at him oddly, then frowns and tells him to think about it before walking off.

That night, Kageyama still doesn't hear the door opening, and he's worried that Shouyou won't be returning tonight. He wonders where his roommate is and contemplates on going on a one-man search party for

him. But then the thought of Shouyou returning to their empty apartment room and locking Kageyama out makes him paranoid, so he opts to just stay and wait patiently, even if every passing second without him is torturous.

Waiting on the couch, Kageyama starts letting his muse contemplate Shouyou's love confession. Hearing him say those three sweet words made Kageyama feel uncomfortable, but he can't say he necessarily hated it. In a way, it had made Kageyama a little bit happy, just because Shouyou is really the only person Kageyama cares for, and his confession is a way for him to know that his roommate enjoys his presence too, even if they do end up arguing a lot sometimes. But the very thought of doing anything romantic with Shouyou, like kissing, gives him a lot of fear. He isn't sure if he would like it, and he isn't sure Shouyou would like it either. And if they do happen to like it, what if they get into an argument that's so bad that, in the end, they end up breaking up and becoming complete strangers again. Shivers run down his spine as he remembers what had happened during their second year of high school. He never wants to repeat that again, so Kageyama resolves his feelings by settling on wanting to just continue being best friends with Shouyou and just hope that maybe things can stay like this forever.

The next day, Kageyama wakes up to the soft fingers of his roommate on his cheeks. Opening up a single eye, he sees the orange-haired man staring down at him, a wondering expression on his face. Kageyama yawns quietly and pulls Shouyou in closer to him, telling him his decision: he wants to just stay friends with him and to continue living like this. He thinks it will go well, but the second he feels the palm of Shouyou's hand slap against his cheek, Kageyama pulls back and scrunches up his nose, disbelief washing over his face. Shouyou doesn't look at him but grumbles something under his breath and slams the door close, leaving Kageyama alone once again.

He's angry. What gives Shouyou the right to slap him like that, then slam the door without any reason? Kageyama is honest with him, but of course, it's always what Shouyou wants. It's never what Kageyama wants any more. Well, frankly, Kageyama is tired of handing Shouyou everything he wants on a silver platter and never getting any amount of respect or thank yous; so he rips the crown away from that smug orange head and wears it proudly on his head again, feeling a newfound sense of self-worth inside him again.

His royal highness is back.

College life suddenly becomes a lot more stressful than before. Without Shouyou, he doesn't have his own personal chef anymore, so he ends up gorging on instant noodles every day. Very unfit for a king, but he has to make do with his lack of resources. Classes have become more and more annoying, his workload increasing all of a sudden and his motivation decreasing at a faster rate than the projects he is assigned to. He doesn't feel like he's on top of the world, and he doesn't know why. How has his kingship worked before?

Eventually, he loses all motivation and all will to move, and he stops going to classes and just lays down on his bed, a hopeless mess. He doesn't bathe or bother to brush his teeth, and sometimes he doesn't eat any of his instant noodles for a couple days. His chest feels like it's tightening up more and more every day. It really hurts. He clenches his shirt and rolls over on his side, frowning

his eyebrows and scowling at the pain. He blames Shouyou for all this, he thinks, because that idiot is the one who had left him all alone. Shouyouâ€¦ Shouyouâ€¦ Kageyama grits his teeth together, grinding his molars harshly. Shouyou is the only person that can make Kageyama this irritated. Shouyou is the only person who can make him feel this hurt. Shouyou is the only person who has the ability to make him happyâ€”and Kageyama hates him for that. Over the years of knowing the energetic man, Kageyama has grown dependent on him. It's sad, really, having a king like himself needing a low class, no good, annoying person like Shouyou.

But when Kageyama looks back over the years, he realizes it's Shouyou who had given him everything he could have ever asked for. The subconscious wishes Kageyama has had, like being friends with someone who would always stick with him regardless of what happensâ€”that was Shouyou, who is always found by Kageyama's side and always manages to spend all of his spare time with him. Shouyou is the one who gave Kageyama his love for volleyball, and starting their second year of high school, he is the one responsible for many of the Karasuno points during tournaments, giving Kageyama the victories he had always wanted. And it's Shouyou who gives him the comfort he needs, without him even needing to say anything, when his father moves away overseas during his third year and he's left with his mother, who isn't very close to him; but Shouyou welcomes him to his home with open arms and his family treats him much like how they treated their own children. And it's Shouyou who hugs him, and it's Shouyou who high-fives him, and it's Shouyou who shakes hands with him, and it's Shouyou who just does everything for Kageyama, and just realizing this makes the pain in his chest tighten up even more.

He needs to find him.

In a panicked daze, Kageyama stands up, feeling slightly wobbly from not using any of his muscles for a prolonged period of time. He scrambles to grab for his phone, which had been untouched much like everything else for a couple days now, and begins looking for Shouyou's contact information. Then, with unsteady fingers, he begins to tap a quick message, asking mainly where Shouyou is and that Kageyama needs to talk to him. He feels like he's desperate, but really, he is, and hopefully, Shouyou notices that in his sudden text, too.

Waiting for his phone to buzz to signal Shouyou's reply is too long for Kageyama to handle, but then, all of a sudden, he feels his phone vibrating in his hand after exactly five minutes; and, with shaky fingers, he looks at his phone to read what Shouyou says. All he says is "I'm on my way," and despite its brevity, Kageyama feels a sense of relief.

When he hears a soft knocking on the door, he quickly opens it and sees the orange-haired man looking up at him, and Kageyama's heart breaks and he wraps his arms around the boy and slides down onto the floor, bringing his poor victim down with him. He hears Shouyou say many things like "oi, Tobio" and "you stink like crap," but he ignores everything his friend says and just buries his face into Shouyou's orange locks. He feels faint, his heart beating faster, his cheeks flushed with color, and then, he hears Shouyou scream and he looks like he's getting further away from Kageyama, and Kageyama doesn't understand, but then he feels the back of his head hit the floorboards and his vision begins to blur, and suddenly, he sees

nothing and feels nothing.

Suddenly, he finds himself floating in a world of darkness. There is only silence, and when he moves his limbs he doesn't go anywhere. The empty space is sucking away his breath, and it gets harder and harder for him to breathe, and his head begins to spin from the loss of oxygen. But then he sees a light, and he tries to make a grab for it. The light gets closer and closer and closer until he is able to see that it's Shouyou, and he's smiling at him with an outstretched arm. His chest suddenly feels better now, and he stops hurting all over, and for once in a long time, he finds his thoughts filled with sunshine and happiness; and he clutches Shouyou's fingers and promises to never let go.

That's when he's pulled out of the blackness, and he opens his eyes and realizes he had been dreaming. With a sigh of relief, he glances around the room, seeing only white. The air smells of medicine and cleanliness. From the corner of his eye, he sees a brunet figure staring out the window. The stranger hears the shuffling from Kageyama's bed and turns around, looking at him with a stone cold expression. He says, bluntly, that Kageyama had been asleep for a week, his unhealthy condition caused by lack of proper sleep and diet. Kageyama shows him a sheepish frown and looks down at his hands, which are still shaking from weakness. He sighs.

Then, a nurse comes in and says that he has a visitor, and Kageyama expects no one else to come in besides Shouyou—and naturally, he does, and he looks at Kageyama with a hard glare. He says that Kageyama is an idiot, and he insults Shouyou back by saying that his roommate is, in fact, the idiot between the two of them. But when he says that, Shouyou just smiles and places his hand on Kageyama's shaky ones, mumbling how he was worried all this time.

And it's in that moment when Kageyama feels his heart race again, and his chest becoming tighter, and his cheeks flushing again—but instead of the pain he's been feeling all this time, it's a strange, fluffy feeling that's euphoric and addicting. He looks at Shouyou in a different light now, gazing at how his orange locks frame his bright, glowing face, hardened from the stresses of life but still soft from the bubbly energy inside of him. Just looking at Shouyou makes Kageyama really, really happy. So happy, that when Shouyou puts his other hand on top of Kageyama's, he pulls the orange-haired man closer to him and presses his chapped lips on his soft cheeks, pulling away to look at the surprised man again, and then repeating his action with much more vigor and emotion. When he retracts his face from Shouyou's, he indulges in the short silence between them and then suddenly says how he had been thinking about Shouyou a lot, and that he thinks he wants to give a romantic relationship with him a try, because admittedly, Kageyama doesn't just want Shouyou: he needs Shouyou.

Shouyou just laughs and nods his head, squeezing both of Kageyama's hands, saying sweet nothings in his ear to soothe Kageyama who is starting to tear up a little. The crown of the king falls between them, ending the dictatorial kingdom once and for all. It won't be what he wants anymore. Never again.

Now, it'll always be what they want—and Kageyama thinks, he's absolutely fine with all this, as long as Shouyou is beside him for the next ten, or twenty, or fifty years.

But for now, Kageyama gives Shouyou a cheeky, crooked grin and just looks at his roommate, his best friend, and his lover with bright eyes, making one last request before formally getting rid of his crown once and for all.

"I want a hug, Shouyou."

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A try at some angst. This wasn't supposed to be this long. I was planning on just writing a short drabble that would be cute and fluffy, but I guess this is okay too.

End
file.